



The Fiscal Burden of Illegal Immigration

On United States Taxpayers 2023

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A FEDERATION FOR AMERICAN IMMIGRATION REFORM RESEARCH REPORT

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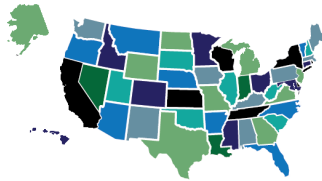
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The Fiscal Burden of Illegal Aliens on U.S. Taxpayers

Total Governmental Expenditures on Illegal Aliens



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Total Federal Expenditures

\$66,449,136,000

Total State & Local Expenditures

\$115,608,730,000

Total National Expenditures

\$182,057,865,000

Total Tax Contributions by Illegal Aliens



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Total Federal Taxes Paid

\$16,219,495,000

Total State & Local Taxes Paid

\$15,172,140,000

Total Tax Contributions

\$31,391,635,000

Total Fiscal Burden of Illegal Aliens



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**\$150.7
BILLION**

Total National Expenditures

\$182,057,865,000

Total Tax Contributions

\$31,391,635,000

Total Burden on Taxpayers

\$150,666,230,000

Total Fiscal Burden of Illegal Aliens on U.S. Taxpayers:

\$150,666,230,000

Introduction

This report is currently the only comprehensive examination of the financial impact of illegal immigration in the United States. Every day, hundreds of millions of dollars in American taxpayer money are spent on costs directly associated with illegal immigration. Only a small fraction of these costs is ever recouped from taxes paid by illegal aliens, with the rest falling on the shoulders of American citizens and legal immigrants.

Our aim in this report is to show the American people the fiscal burden of illegal immigration at every level and across nearly all aspects of life. These costs range from emergency medical care to in-state tuition; from incarcerating illegal aliens in local jails to federal budgets that pay out billions in welfare every year. Because there are so many different ways that money is spent on illegal aliens at both the state and local levels, the information in our report is otherwise hard to find (or even intentionally hidden). This report supersedes FAIR's 2017 cost study¹ and highlights massive increases in spending related to illegal immigration that were implemented while American citizens deal with an uncertain economy.

Why does this matter?

Put simply, almost all expenses associated with illegal immigration are preventable. Illegal immigration's annual net burden on the economy, now more than \$150 billion, is greater than the annual GDP output of 15 U.S. states.² There is a strong correlation between the security of America's borders and the rate at which the cost of illegal immigration increases. With proper border controls and the enforcement of laws already on the books, the cost of illegal immigration would be greatly reduced.

The period since FAIR's last fiscal burden study in 2017 has not been easy for the American people. A global pandemic and economic disruptions have drastically raised the prices of necessary goods and services, and has contracted the jobs market so that many citizens remain without gainful employment. Because these factors are also global, the U.S. remains a magnet for foreign nationals who wish to compete for the jobs and benefits that American citizens rely on. While millions of Americans are struggling to put food on the table and hold gainful employment, we believe they deserve to know where their federal, state, and local tax dollars are going.

Overview

This report examines the annual fiscal impact of illegal aliens on at both the federal and state levels. FAIR used the most recent data available and accounted for new programs and legislative/policy developments up to the end of 2022. Significant temporary spending related to illegal immigration, like aid programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, also took place during the study period. While we do highlight COVID-related costs, they are not included in our overall totals because of their temporary nature, and this report strives to paint a picture of more static costs.

This project contains extensive analysis of both federal and state/local spending on many fronts, reflecting the nationwide scope of illegal immigration. From public schooling and postsecondary education programs, to welfare and healthcare costs, we account for as many known costs as possible. This wide scope is important, as the highest costs often occur outside of traditional illegal alien destinations.³

In total, the gross cost of illegal immigration now total \$183 billion, up more than 35.7 percent since 2017. The cost incurred per illegal alien (including their U.S.-born children) has increased as well, now totaling \$8,776 annually.

Because this report covers the full fiscal impact of illegal immigration, it also includes the contributions of illegal aliens to the economy. These include tax payments made directly to state and local jurisdictions, the federal government, as well as excise, property, and sales taxes. However, these receipts fall far short of covering the expenses incurred due to illegal immigration. Taxes paid by illegal immigrants only covered around 17.2 percent of the costs they created for American citizens.

When the taxes paid by illegal aliens are factored in, the net cost of illegal immigration to U.S. taxpayers is now \$150.7 billion. This means that each American taxpayer shells out a net average of \$956 (or \$1,156 before the taxes paid by illegal aliens are factored in) due to illegal immigration.⁴

What's Changed

Since our 2017 report, the immigration landscape has shifted significantly. The Trump administration engaged in an aggressive approach towards combatting illegal immigration, which increased spending on security but also tempered the growth of other federal expenses tied to illegal immigration. However, even this slower growth was offset by an increase in states expanding programs available to illegal aliens like in-state tuition and certain medical benefits. In many cases, these expansions were a reaction to those administration policies, but they have continued to broaden in scope under the Biden administration.

Currently, under the Biden administration, the U.S. is experiencing a full-fledged migration crisis. The

illegal alien population is expanding rapidly after drastic cutbacks to border security, with monthly encounters hitting all-time highs. The administration is now attempting to redirect additional border security funding to expand migrant processing initiatives that have, so far, only spurred additional illegal immigration. Another new program is set to allow tens of thousands of illegal aliens to fly directly into the United States monthly under “humanitarian parole.”

This self-imposed crisis is only driving the costs associated with illegal immigration even higher. States like Texas and Arizona have been forced to spend huge sums to compensate for reduced federal law enforcement presence on the border. Meanwhile, the federal government and states like California and New York alike are increasing illegal alien access to taxpayer-funded benefits.⁵ Various policy shifts have made it harder to obtain data on these increases in spending from the federal government, but FAIR has exhaustively analyzed the effects of our ongoing illegal migration crisis in this report. The net result has been a sharp increase in the fiscal costs of illegal immigration under the Biden administration that shows no signs of slowing down.

A Note on the Lack of Transparency in Government Data Reporting

Information transparency is essential to good governance. It encourages a well-informed citizenry to hold their elected officials responsible and motivates those officials to implement policies that benefit their constituents instead of special interest groups. Furthermore, citizens have the right to know pertinent information, presented in a clear and comprehensible manner, on issues that impact them. Unfortunately, there is a concerning lack of transparency and openness when it comes to the issue of illegal immigration.

While preparing this study, we often had to grapple with a paucity of easily accessible official data. Many state and federal entities do not publish detailed data that they collect, making it difficult to reliably separate illegal aliens from citizens or lawful immigrants in many of the fields covered in this report. We have also encountered cases where the current administration has revoked or restricted documents published by previous administrations in order to reduce the visibility of data which shines a negative light on their immigration policy agenda. Extremely helpful publications like the Alien Incarceration Report, which documented foreign criminals in custody in the United States, are no longer updated under the Biden administration. This kind of subtle de facto censorship is highly unethical and does not serve the interests of the American public.

Thankfully, we were able to find most of the necessary information to complete this study by analyzing existing databases and publications from the federal and state/local governments as well as other reputable organizations and academic institutions. However, as is noted throughout this report, there were a few instances where we were unable to obtain enough data to make reliable estimates. For

example, illegal immigration imposes a significant direct cost on the United States in the form of gang-related crime and trafficking of drugs and humans, but thanks to jurisdictional differences and “sanctuary” policies that protect criminal illegal aliens in many states or localities, this cost often remains a “known unknown.” For other topics, like post-secondary education, we had to stitch sources together and create new methodologies in order to calculate our estimates because, while the relevant data is tracked, it is fragmented across different sources.

So, why are Americans being kept in the dark? Primarily because the political and ideological influence of the open-borders lobby, both within and outside the federal government, holds significant sway over the Biden administration and many state governments. This “hear nothing, see nothing, say nothing” attitude is rooted in the hope that if the American public doesn’t have easy access to valid information regarding the impacts of illegal immigration, they will accept the lie that no problem exists.

In carrying out this study, FAIR is advancing the belief that the American people have a right to transparent and accurate information so that they are fully informed of what is occurring in their country and how much it costs them.

Summary of Methodology

FAIR made every effort to source the data in this report from government agencies and testimony from government officials, using these as the foundation of our estimates. When official data is unclear or unavailable, FAIR looked to research generated by credible, non-partisan organizations and academic institutions. On the rare occasions that a calculation must be estimated and/or assumed, we offer a detailed reasoning for the estimation so that readers can examine the relevant information and judge our conclusions for themselves. For the sake of maximum accuracy, we have noted various areas where we believe it is impossible to estimate a cost.

Throughout this study, we have taken caution to never overestimate totals, and have chosen to err on the lower side of cost estimates, and the higher side of tax contributions, when our calculations resulted in a range instead of a static figure. We do this to ensure that our cost figures do not extend beyond what the evidence can empirically prove. Combining this with the fact that there are some costs that cannot be reliably estimated, it can be safely assumed that the actual cost of illegal immigration is considerably higher than the final tally offered here. Given current trends – rapidly increasing illegal immigration, increased federal and state government spending, inflation, and the fact that numerous state benefits are set for expansion to unauthorized migrants – the fiscal burden of illegal immigration is sure to grow even higher in the near future.

Every effort was made to find and utilize the most recent data available as a basis for calculations; thus, the majority of the data is drawn from sources covering between fiscal years (FY) 2020 and 2022. However, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the massive government spending binge it caused, complicated our calculations. In cases when spending on various programs was sharply but temporarily increased during the pandemic, we preferred to utilize pre-pandemic data and adjust accordingly for inflation and/or other developments in order to paint a more accurate picture of the static costs. We do not include pandemic-related spending measures unless they were enacted as permanent programs. However, we make a point to highlight these costs in their relevant sections so that readers are aware of their impacts.

An essential part of our calculations relies on FAIR's latest illegal alien population estimate, which is 15.5 million (20.9 million when the U.S.-born children of illegal aliens are included) as of the beginning of 2022.⁶ Our estimate is higher than those offered by most mainstream immigration research organizations, most of which stick to the oft-repeated "10-11 million" figure, despite record illegal immigration over the past couple of decades and even further surges over the past few years. Most mainstream estimates fail to take into account the constant rate of growth in this demographic, overestimate the outflow rate of illegal aliens, and/or have deceptively lowered the rate at which they believe the U.S. Census Bureau undercounts illegal aliens. Moreover, for ideological reasons, many groups also misclassify the increasing influx of unaccompanied alien minors (UAMs), Temporary Protected Status (TPS) recipients, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) beneficiaries, and parolees as being in the United States "legally." This is a dishonest characterization because such individuals have not received any lawful immigration status. Rather, these illegal aliens have merely received temporary and discretionary reprieves from removal and lack a clear pathway to citizenship.

Finally, it's important to note that FAIR includes costs incurred by the minor, U.S.-born children of illegal aliens, as these costs are fully attributable to their parent's unlawful residence in the United States. Many mass-immigration apologists claim that this is an unfair inclusion, as the estimate does not include any long-term contributions made by these minors once they become adults. However, further research has demonstrated that the children of migrants – especially illegal aliens – no longer see significant economic improvement as was the case several decades ago.⁷ Therefore, if we did attempt to account for their future tax contributions, we would also need to account for their reliance on state and federal benefits programs. This would likely only serve to increase our cost estimates further, not drastically lower it as many open border advocates insist.

Part I: Federal Expenditures and Receipts



Federal Education Costs

Education

Primary and Secondary Education (Title I-A)

\$3,020,696,000

The “Every Student Succeeds Act” Title I, Part A (ESEA Title I-A) provides for grants of supplemental federal funding to increase educational opportunities for and improve the academic performance of children from low-income families, among whom illegal aliens and their children are disproportionately represented. Approximately 47 percent of all K-12 students in the country qualify for these grants either individually or on a schoolwide basis.⁸ In 2022, just over \$17.5 billion was budgeted for this program.⁹ Based on FAIR’s income profile for illegal aliens, the vast majority of the children of illegal aliens will fall within the economic eligibility criteria applicable to this program.

FAIR estimates that as of 2022, after years of unprecedented illegal immigration and a surge in unaccompanied minors arriving in the United States, approximately 5 million K-12 students in the United States are illegal aliens or the children of illegal aliens.¹⁰ Furthermore, this population is heavily overrepresented among Title I-A recipients due to their families’ lower income levels, comprising nearly 20 percent of total recipients by our estimates. Using calculations based on this proportion and the program’s overall budget, FAIR estimates that approximately \$3 billion is spent annually on Title I-A grants to K-12 students linked to illegal immigration.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) – Title III**\$580,895,000**

The federal government provides Title III-A grant funding to the states based on census data on school-age limited English proficiency (LEP) youth. This funding is dedicated to improving English-language acquisition for students whose native language is not English. According to U.S. Department of Education data, \$831,400,000 was allocated in FY 2022 in support of supplemental English language instruction.¹¹ Of that amount, \$764,335,990 was distributed to states based on the number of English learners in their schools.

In FAIR’s recent report on education, we estimated that in 2020 approximately 3.6 million LEP students in American schools were either illegal aliens or the children of illegal aliens.¹² Due to unchecked illegal migration and the arrival of unprecedented numbers of unaccompanied minors, we now estimate that the number of students connected to illegal immigration has increased to approximately 3.8 million.¹³ This represents 76 percent of LEP students in the U.S. Based on the per-student costs detailed in our aforementioned study on education, it can safely be estimated that illegal aliens and their children account for almost \$581 million in Title III-A funding in FY 2022.

Migrant Schooling (Title I-C)**\$239,418,000**

The Migrant Education Program (MEP) was established in 1966 as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Its goal is to help migrant students who move between different areas inside of the United States regularly during the year receive an adequate education and meet academic standards. These students often face challenges to learning because they may interact with inconsistent curricula and are not settled long enough to meaningfully engage with their schools. The federally appropriated funds for this program were \$423,749,000 in FY 2022.¹⁴

The U.S. Department of Education indicates that the primary beneficiaries of the MEP program are “the children of migrant agricultural workers and fishers.”¹⁵ The majority of migrant agriculture and fisheries workers are illegal aliens — approximately 56.5 percent — according to a study conducted by the Pew Research Center.¹⁶ Therefore, using these assumptions as a basis for our methodology, FAIR estimates that approximately \$239,418,000 of the MEP budget goes to educating the children of illegal aliens.

Head Start**\$2,768,080,000**

The federal Head Start and Early Head Start programs combine federal funding (\$11.037 billion budgeted for FY 2022) with local matching funds. There is little data on the exact enrollment of illegal-immigration-connected participants in these programs, but children with a non-English home language make up at least a third of total Head Start enrollment.¹⁷ In FAIR’s most recent study of education

costs, we determined that approximately 76% of LEP students in primary and secondary education nationwide are the children of illegal aliens. While illegal alien participation in Head Start is likely to be somewhat lower because of a general reluctance to engage with federal aid programs in many cases (as noted elsewhere in this report), this is counterbalanced by a higher poverty rate that increases the likelihood they will be eligible. Using a conservative estimate that the proportions are the same for illegal alien households with children, which correlates with the generally low English proficiency rates of illegal aliens, we estimate that around 25% of Head Start enrollment pertains to the children of illegal aliens. This means that the total federal Head Start expenditures attributable to illegal immigration are well over \$2.7 billion.

COVID-19 Relief Funds

The use of pandemic relief funds for illegal aliens and their children in schools was also noted in FAIR's recent report on the excessive costs that bilingual education imposes. The COVID-19 pandemic had particularly heavy impacts on LEP students, the vast majority (76 percent) of whom are illegal aliens or the children of illegal aliens. Most LEPs do not have an English-speaking home environment to maintain their limited skills during periods of online schooling. As a result, school districts across the country were burdened with dedicating millions of dollars of COVID-19 relief funds to special bilingual/LEP programs that do not serve the general student population.



demic, Congress passed three different relief packages: the Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund packages I and II, and the American Rescue Plan (ARP). These programs awarded grants to help offset the impact of pandemic shutdowns on schools.¹⁸ In total, schools received over \$189.5 billion, an unprecedented level of federal spending, for the first time in U.S. history. The ARP ESSER funds for education, totaling \$122 billion, require states to set aside 5 percent, and districts 20 percent, of the federal funding for “most affected students,” specifically mentioning LEP students multiple times.¹⁹ This means a huge allocation of limited funds to assisting LEP students, mostly the children of illegal aliens, at the expense of taxpayers.

In addition, many districts spent large chunks of discretionary relief funding on services specifically for LEP students. Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia, for example, spent \$2,681,449 of ARP funds on LEP-specific services with no relevance to the general student population.²⁰ The same is true of dozens of other school districts as well. The total cost of this relief funding giveaway for illegal aliens is split across thousands of school

districts that compile budgets in different ways and is likely incalculable. If ascertained, however, it would likely be included as one of the single largest education-related costs of 2020 and 2021 that illegal aliens imposed on the American taxpayer. Since it is impossible to decipher to what degree funds were used for the education of illegal aliens, and since these are not regular annual expenses, we do not ascribe a total to this cost. However, it is something worth noting as it certainly resulted in a temporary – but significant – burden on U.S. taxpayers.

Total Federal Educational Expenditures:

Primary and Secondary Education - Title I-A	\$3,020,696,000
Limited English Proficiency (LEP) - Title III	\$580,895,000
Migrant Schooling (Title I-C)	\$239,418,000
Head Start	\$2,768,080,000

Total	\$6,609,089,000
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Federal Medical Costs

Medical Costs

Most (but not all) illegal aliens are, as a matter of law, barred from receiving welfare benefits through targeted aid programs that are jointly administered by states and the federal government. This bar was put in place by the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA).²¹ The PRWORA states that “aliens who are not qualified aliens” are ineligible for “federal public benefits” and for “state and local public benefits.” The act defines a qualified alien as any immigrant “who is lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act,” or who meets at least one of several other exceptions listed in Section 431 of the Act. These exceptions cover many people who are unlawfully present in the United States but have been granted deferred action through programs such as parole with a set term of at least one year, TPS, and several other categories.

In addition, many states still provide subsidized healthcare services to illegal aliens (more on these programs can be found in the part of this report that covers state healthcare). These programs technically do not violate the terms of PRWORA if they are solely funded by state taxpayers. However, the diversion of state taxes into these types of programs often result in larger state requests for federal budget assistance, as including low-income illegal aliens often make states eligible for additional federal

grants. Much of this assistance is provided in the form of supplemental healthcare funding distributed to state providers.

Medicaid is a joint federal and state program that provides healthcare coverage to children, pregnant women, senior citizens, and individuals with disabilities, among others. While most illegal aliens are technically excluded from full Medicaid programs, they may still receive Medicaid coverage for prenatal and obstetric care. These services are provided based on the idea that the unborn child, rather than the illegal alien mother, is the one receiving medical treatment. In addition, under the current interpretation of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, the U.S.-born children of illegal aliens are natural-born U.S. citizens. Quite often, they are also considered “targeted low-income children” eligible for Medicaid and other federal medical assistance programs.

Finally, it is unclear if the thousands of illegal aliens paroled into the country by the Biden administration will become eligible for Medicaid and other federal benefits. Paroled illegal aliens can receive certain benefits if the terms of their release is for a period of at least one year, but there is little information on whether these parolees from the border are receiving any set term lengths at all, and what federal benefits are being extended to them.

Uncompensated Hospital Expenditures

\$8,153,000,000

In 2017, the federal outlay to help cover uncompensated care provided to uninsured individuals was approximately \$21.7 billion annually. Assuming these reimbursements occur at a similar rate today, that accounts for approximately \$26.3 billion.²² The national uninsured population of all ages was 26.4 million in the first quarter of 2022.²³ According to a 2019 estimate from the Migration Policy Institute, a little over half (53 percent) of the illegal alien population in the United States is uninsured.²⁴ This proportion would suggest, according to FAIR’s most recent estimates of the Illegal aliens population, that roughly 8.2 million of the illegal aliens currently in the country do not have insurance coverage, making up approximately 31 percent of the total uninsured population.²⁵ If uninsured illegal aliens are assumed to require healthcare at a rate similar to other uninsured persons, they would make up approximately \$8.2 billion of the uncompensated hospital expenditures in the United States.

Medicaid Births

\$1,596,902,000

After rising rapidly since the 1980s, births to illegal alien mothers dropped along with the overall birth rate during the Great Recession (2008-2010). Since then, the numbers have held relatively steady. The Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) estimated that in 2014, illegal alien mothers in the U.S. gave birth to 297,000 children, or 7.5 percent of total births.²⁶ In 2020 (the most recent year for which statistics are available), foreign-born mothers accounted for 22 percent, or 790,041, of the nationwide total of about 3.6 million births.²⁷

Medicaid paid for 42 percent of all births in 2020.²⁸ However, a study published in 2018 found that 48 percent of foreign-born women had their births paid for by Medicaid, compared with 42 percent of native-born mothers.²⁹ This would mean that Medicaid covered the costs of approximately 377,000 births (48 percent) to foreign-born mothers. The cost of those births is shared between the federal and the state taxpayer. The total cost depends on the type of delivery and whether complications occur.

We assume that the birthing costs incurred by illegal alien mothers will be roughly similar to legal immigrant and native mothers. According to past medical research conducted in Colorado, illegal alien mothers “have lower rates of pre-term delivery and low birth weight infants, but higher rates of pregnancy related risk factors.” These risk factors are offset by other factors, such as illegal alien mothers consuming less tobacco and alcohol than the national average, lower hypertension rates and other factors.³⁰ Based on the birth rates observed in the Colorado study, this indicates that roughly 201,960 (68 percent) of current illegal alien births were natural, and 95,040 (32 percent) were surgical. Again, these rates suggest that the average costs for illegal aliens will be similar to the overall national average.

The federal share of the expenditure varies among states, averaging out to approximately 63 percent overall. Thus, to determine the cost of illegal aliens using Medicaid to fund births, we remove the percentage of illegal aliens believed to have some form of health insurance, which is approximately 47 percent. The uninsured remainder comes out to 157,410 births — 107,038 naturally, and 50,371 by surgical intervention. With natural births costing \$13,024 on average and surgically-assisted births averaging \$22,646, the total, combined state and federal expenditure for obstetric medical costs is approximately \$2,534,764,578.³¹ With 63 percent of these costs being covered by the federal government, the total federal cost comes out to \$1.6 billion.

This estimate is certainly on the conservative side of reality. In 2007, a report in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that “... a little-known part of the state-federal health insurance program for the poor,” known as Emergency Medicaid, “pays about \$2 billion a year for emergency treatment for a group of patients who, according to hospitals, mostly comprise illegal immigrants. Most of it goes to reimburse hospitals for delivering babies for women who show up in their emergency rooms, according to interviews with hospital officials and studies.”³² A portion of this expenditure is attributable to the \$1.6 billion Medicaid spends on illegal alien births. However, there is little recent data regarding what percentage of that \$2 billion expense covers emergency obstetrical services for illegal aliens (given both inflation and increased Medicaid spending since then, this figure is certainly much higher now). Without further data, FAIR is unable to estimate a reliable value for this additional expenditure.

Improper Medicaid Payments

\$7,997,566,000

The total amount of improper Medicaid payouts in the United States during FY 2022 was approximately \$80.6 billion, or 15.6 percent of total outlays.³³ By contrast, Medicaid Fraud Control

Units (MFCUs) were able to recover only \$1.7 billion in FY 2021 (when improper payments were \$99 billion, 22 percent of total outlays), around 1.7 percent of the total improperly paid.³⁴

Assuming that uninsured illegal aliens receive improper Medicaid payouts and/or commit Medicaid fraud at the same rate as U.S. citizens — a very conservative estimate, considering illegal aliens are both more likely to commit document-related fraud and have greater incentive to commit Medicaid fraud — there would be approximately 1,284,508 illegal aliens receiving improper Medicaid payouts each year. The average improper Medicaid payout per-person comes out to approximately \$6,226, meaning the overall annual total loss attributable to illegal aliens is approximately \$8 billion.

Medicaid for U.S.-born Children of Illegal Aliens

\$5,385,007,000

U.S. citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents (green card holders) are eligible for Medicaid benefits; therefore, the U.S.-born children of illegal aliens are eligible for Medicaid. While these children were born in the United States, they would not be present in the United States had their parents not entered the U.S. illegally or overstayed a visa. These children are typically classified as low-income (see FAIR's income profile of illegal aliens in this report). Because of this, they represent a significant burden on the U.S. Medicaid program.

There is a strong correlation between uninsured status and low income.³⁵ The vast majority of uninsured people in the United States are low-income earners, for the simple reason that it is more difficult for low-income individuals to afford health insurance and low-wage jobs are likely to offer fewer health benefits.³⁶ Therefore, low-income families depend more on government healthcare programs to pay for any medical treatment that they require.

Per federal guidelines, in order to be eligible for Medicaid on the basis of low income, children must be members of a family earning an income less than 138 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL). States have the option to extend Medicaid coverage to those whose income is too high to qualify under federal guidelines, but most states have set their guidelines at 138 percent of the FPL.³⁷ The average family headed by an illegal alien falls around or below the FPL, and therefore their U.S.-born children will be eligible for Medicaid. Many other illegal aliens are likely utilizing various methods of fraud to improperly obtain Medicaid, as regularly occurs with other federal benefit programs.

At least 53 percent of illegal alien households are uninsured, meaning that approximately 2.83 million U.S.-born children of illegal aliens are without insurance.³⁸ Based on the foregoing evidence, FAIR estimates that approximately 75 percent of these 2.83 million U.S.-born children of illegal aliens (2.1 million) are eligible for receiving Medicaid as members of



low-income households, a similar rate to households with a non-illegal head of household. This accounts for the few illegal alien families whose income is in fact too high to qualify, as well as others who avoid interacting with federal programs to maintain a low profile.

Per the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission, average Medicaid spending per enrolled child in 2020 was \$3,500.³⁹ Adjusted for inflation, the total today is now around \$4,030. This would make the annual Medicaid spending on the U.S.-born children of illegal aliens about \$8.5 billion. The federal share of that expenditure (63 percent) is about \$5.4 billion annually, with the remainder being a cost borne by the states (see the state and local portion of this report for those totals).

Affordable Care Act (ACA)

The ACA allows for eligible individuals to apply for various levels of federally subsidized healthcare, depending on their annual income. While most illegal aliens do not qualify for coverage under the ACA, some with certain designations and deferments do. These categories include those with TPS, Deferred Enforced Departure (DED), Deferred Action Status (other than DACA), victims of trafficking, some asylum applicants, and several other categories.⁴⁰

Data is lacking on exactly how many individuals fall into each of these categories. However, when taking maximum estimates from various immigration agencies and organizations, it is estimated that somewhere between 500,000 and 1 million illegal aliens fall into an immigration category covered by the ACA. Unfortunately, without more information regarding the total number of illegal aliens that qualify for coverage along with their income levels, family size, and/or participation in other programs covered by this report, it is impossible to estimate how many illegal aliens participate in the ACA, and what level of federal subsidy they receive. However, this number is almost certainly substantial, and the federal government should be reporting the extent to which those who entered the country illegally participate in this program.

Total Federal Medical Expenditures

Uncompensated Hospital Expenditures	\$8,153,000,000
Medicaid Births	\$1,596,902,000
Medicaid Fraud	\$7,997,566,000
Medicaid for U.S.-born Children of Illegal Aliens	\$5,385,007,000
<hr/>	
Total	\$23,132,475,000



Federal Justice Costs

Justice Enforcement

Immigration enforcement constitutes a significant portion of the overall federal law enforcement budget. Because every crime committed by an illegal alien is inherently a preventable crime, immigration has a broad effect on justice expenditures beyond the costs directly involved in securing the borders and managing ports of entry. Therefore, this report separates federal immigration enforcement expenditures into two categories: 1) the cost of securing the border, managing ports of entry, and processing/removing immigration violators from the interior; and 2) the cost of prosecuting/incarcerating federal criminal aliens and subsidizing state and local law enforcement expenses connected with illegal immigration (e.g., housing illegal aliens in local jails, information-sharing costs, etc.)

Most of these expenditures cannot be eliminated as long as the United States remains the most common destination for illegal migrants. However, many of them could be drastically reduced by the construction of a functional border barrier, the implementation of effective deterrents to illegal immigration, and the comprehensive detention and removal of criminal aliens living in the United States. In addition, the refusal of many countries to accept their own citizens when they are deported from the United States also increases costs to the American taxpayer.⁴¹

Federal Incarceration**\$1,670,374,000**

The illegal alien population consists of both those aliens who entered the United States without authorization and those who entered the United States lawfully but overstayed their authorized period of stay. Illegal aliens are subject to removal from the United States simply because they are present in the United States without authorization. However, many illegal aliens come to the attention of DHS only when they are arrested for the commission of a crime.

Legal immigrants are also subject to deportation if convicted of certain crimes. However, data indicates that these immigrants tend to commit crimes at a lower rate than illegal aliens.⁴² This is unsurprising since the very concept of illegal immigration requires a certain level of disrespect for the laws of the destination country. We include costs of incarcerating legal immigrants if their convictions are likely to lead to the loss of their immigration status.

Illegal aliens who come to the U.S. for economic gain often commit crimes such as identity theft or using fraudulent documents to work illegally, unlicensed driving, tax evasion, and/or unlawfully obtaining public benefits. Moreover, many illegal aliens cross the border without authorization specifically for the purpose of engaging in criminal activity within the U.S., such as drug and human trafficking. Conversely, legal immigrants have a greater incentive to avoid criminal behavior due to the possibility of losing their hard-earned legal status if convicted.

The majority of illegal immigrants who are convicted of crimes are prosecuted in state courts and confined to state correctional facilities to serve out their sentences. These expenses are addressed in the section of this report covering the state costs of illegal immigration. By contrast, the population of foreign-born individuals incarcerated in Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) facilities tends to include more illegal aliens than foreign-born populations incarcerated in state prisons.⁴³ This is because the federal government has exclusive jurisdiction over immigration-specific crimes. Therefore, both legal and illegal migrants convicted of criminal violations of the INA are confined to federal prisons. Illegal aliens who have been taken into custody by the federal government and placed in deportation proceedings will also be held in federal detention facilities. Both BOP and ICE maintain such

facilities. This section addresses BOP costs as well as costs borne by the US Marshals Service (USMS), which detains many illegal aliens before trial and before sentencing. The following sections on ICE expenditures include the costs of detaining aliens in facilities owned and operated by that agency.



BOP statistics indicate that by the end of 2022, the number of alien inmates in BOP custody is 25,608, a number that has been slowly increasing since many prisoners were released during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴⁴ A 2019 report by the Department of Justice estimates that 94% of alien inmates in BOP custody have no claim to lawful status.⁴⁵ The cost to incarcerate federal inmates has increased markedly in the past few years, with the FY 2020 figure of \$39,924 per inmate being an approximate increase of \$4,500 from the previous fiscal year.⁴⁶ While the COVID-19 pandemic has delayed the release of the most recent statistics on the cost of incarceration, generously assuming a similar figure to FY 2020 would imply annual costs of over \$1 billion for alien BOP inmates alone.

The USMS also incurs significant costs related to illegal aliens because they are responsible for much of federal pre-trial and pre-sentencing detention. While USMS custody is more short-term, it also sees much higher annual numbers than the BOP. Approximately 37 percent of individuals in USMS custody at any given time are illegal aliens, with 98 percent of that group being criminal illegal aliens.⁴⁷ This high percentage of illegal aliens in USMS custody and USMS's consistent custody numbers year-over-year translate to approximately \$648 million in annual spending on custody and transportation for illegal aliens.

Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) \$4,118,902,000

The branch of DHS responsible for interior enforcement of the Immigration and Nationality Act is U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Within ICE, the office most directly involved in the arrest and deportation of illegal aliens is the Office of Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO). ERO is responsible for apprehending illegal aliens and placing them in removal proceedings, detaining aliens who are a flight risk, and effectuating the removal of aliens ordered deported by U.S. immigration courts or federal district courts. To accomplish its mission, ERO works with state, local, and other federal law enforcement agencies to identify and process illegal aliens. This includes lodging “detainer” requests with state and local agencies to ensure that criminal illegal aliens are transferred into DHS custody, especially when those jurisdictions have entered into 287(g) agreements with ICE that allow local and state officers to assist with immigration law enforcement.⁴⁸

ERO also liaises with the Federal BOP to ensure that illegal aliens being held for ICE pending immigration hearings are processed appropriately. In addition, ERO works with BOP to make sure that illegal aliens incarcerated for federal crimes are promptly deported when their sentences are completed. ERO activities incur a broad range of annual expenses, including holding aliens in DHS-operated detention facilities, or leased facilities. The FY 2021 budget for ERO was about \$4.11 billion, and it is appropriate to attribute the entirety of this budget to combating illegal immigration.⁴⁹

Customs and Border Protection (CBP)**\$8,565,574,000**

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), another DHS agency, is responsible for securing the borders of the United States and managing land, sea, and air ports of entry. CBP acts as the first line of defense against illegal entry, alien and drug smuggling, and human trafficking. A large portion of CBP's responsibilities relates directly to detecting, deterring, and prosecuting illegal immigration.

CBP is also responsible for the trade management, impost collection, licensing and enforcement duties that were handled by the U.S. Customs Service prior to the formation of DHS. Therefore, we must determine which costs relate to trade management and impost functions and which arise directly from border security functions.

Breaking down the enacted FY 2022 budget by component, Congress directly appropriated a total of \$8,565,574,000 for the components of CBP involved in border security, which is effectively everything outside of the CBP Office of Trade.⁵⁰ This large figure reflects the scale of the border crisis and its continuous growth. The FY 2023 President's Budget, which is essentially the administration's wish list, would eliminate appropriated border wall funding but ultimately increase the border-related spending total above \$9 billion if enacted because of the demands illegal immigration imposes on CBP.

Other ICE Operations**\$1,715,897,000**

ICE is responsible for enforcing both civil and criminal immigration laws within the interior of the United States. Non-ERO ICE operations conducted by the Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) department involve detecting, arresting, and prosecuting lawfully present aliens who engage in criminal acts, as well as detecting, detaining, and criminally prosecuting illegal aliens involved in, human trafficking and smuggling, drug trafficking, and gun running. ICE is also responsible for the enforcement of U.S. customs laws within the interior of the United States and investigations of certain transnational crimes. As such, it handles some of the impost collection, licensing and enforcement duties that were handled by the U.S. Customs Service prior to the formation of DHS.

Accordingly, it is necessary to distinguish non-ERO ICE expenses associated with the criminal prosecution of lawfully admitted alien criminals, international terrorism interdiction, and customs enforcement duties, from those expenses related to the criminal investigations of illegal aliens.⁵¹ HSI operations are budgeted at approximately \$1.7 billion in FY 2022.⁵² HSI's work is almost always heavily involved with transnational crime, involving violations of visas and other immigration-related offenses. HSI is also responsible for investigating the cartels that smuggle narcotics and people into the United States, and much of their work on transnational crime is devoted to this particular menace.

State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP)**\$234,000,000**

The State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) provides federal payments to states and localities that incurred correctional officer salary costs for incarcerating criminal illegal aliens who have at least one felony or two misdemeanor convictions for violations of state or local law, and who are incarcerated for at least 4 consecutive days during the reporting period.⁵³ This program tends to cover only a minute percentage (typically less than one percent) of the full cost of incarceration, and the rest are absorbed by state and local jurisdictions. Appropriations for this program were \$244,000,000 in FY 2021 and \$234,000,000 in FY 2022.⁵⁴ It should be noted that the Biden administration formally proposed removing all funding for this program over the past two fiscal years, which would have removed even the most meager federal compensation received for the immense cost that criminal illegal aliens impose on the states who incarcerate them. So far, Congress has rejected these proposals.

Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR)**\$622,809,000**

The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) is a DOJ agency that includes the U.S. Immigration Court, the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) and the Office of the Chief Administrative Hearing Officer (OCAHO). The U.S. Immigration Court hears deportation cases lodged against both lawfully admitted and illegal aliens. The BIA hears appeals of U.S. Immigration Court Decisions. The OCAHO hears cases involving allegations of knowingly hiring illegal aliens and failure to comply with employment verification requirements. The vast majority of the work performed by EOIR is handled by the U.S. Immigration Court, which is faced a case backlog amounting to more than 1.9 million active cases at the end of FY 2022.⁵⁵

Based on data available through Syracuse University's Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), which analyzes deportation cases by the type of charge levied against the respondent, roughly 70 percent of new cases are based upon entry without inspection, terrorism, crime, and other violations associated with illegal alien status.⁵⁶ This is a significant increase in cases involving illegal aliens, as opposed to visa violations, from previous years and coincides with the rapid collapse of border security. 31.1 percent of new immigration cases are categorized as "other immigration charge", and even an extremely generous assumption that these primarily represent overstays or violations of valid visas still leaves the percentage of new cases involving illegal aliens much higher than in previous years.

EOIR's budget was \$673 million in FY 2020, \$734 million in FY 2021, and \$891 million in FY 2022. Using the most recent appropriation, which largely coincides with the time period the TRAC data covers, EOIR funding used on deportation cases for illegal aliens is approximately \$622,809,000. The President's Budget request for EOIR in 2023, not enacted, is \$1.355 billion, but the vast majority of this increase is split between dubious "legal access initiatives" to fund lawyers for illegal aliens or the opening of more immigration courts to process cases faster; if enacted, this cost could nearly double in the near future.

Alien Minors**\$8,006,000,000**

The number of unaccompanied minors entering the United States continues to surge in an unprecedented manner, as many would-be illegal aliens are aware that an unaccompanied minor is a potential anchor for future migration down the line and with smugglers acutely aware that children are given much less scrutiny. Unfortunately, these minors often suffer untold horrors as they are brought to the American border. The number of unaccompanied minors entering the United States hit a record 122,000 in FY 2021 and then again with 130,000 in FY 2022.⁵⁷

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is tasked with providing for these minors until they are connected with family residing in the United States, placed in foster care, or repatriated. As the scale of UAM entries grows, so do the costs associated with caring for them. These costs have increased on a shocking scale in recent years, with the FY 2020 budget of just over \$1.3 billion increasing to over \$3.6 billion (after a significant transfer of COVID relief funding) in FY 2021 and a staggering \$8 billion in total spending in FY 2022.⁵⁸ This amounts to the spending of \$61,584 per unaccompanied minor entering the shelter system in FY 2022, nearly tripling the per capita costs from our previous comprehensive cost study for a number of unaccompanied alien minors almost twice as large.

NOTE: The financial impact of UAMs on the nation's public school systems is included, as a separate cost, in the sections of this report pertaining to education.

Byrne Grants**\$4,180,000**

The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program is the primary provider of federal criminal justice funding to state and local jurisdictions. The JAG Program provides state and local governments with funding to support law enforcement, prosecution, court, and corrections programs. Funding for this program was \$92,888,141 in FY 2022, a significant decrease from the amounts routinely allocated in years before FY 2021.⁵⁹

The federal government provides SCAAP funding to states that compensates for the roughly 4.5 percent of the national total of state and local prisoners who are illegal aliens. Since the majority of illegal aliens held in state and local custody are prosecuted in state and local courts, this is a good measure for estimating the share of Byrne grants attributable to the arrest, prosecution, and incarceration of illegal aliens. 4.5 percent of the FY 2022 allocation is just over \$4 million.

DOD Funding for National Guard**\$191,625,000**

In order to handle the border crisis, the U.S. Department of Defense continues to keep around 2,500 National Guard members from states across the country deployed to the U.S.-Mexico border to assist the

U.S. Border Patrol in support missions.⁶⁰ States have committed varying numbers of troops and other means of support, like aviation assets, with funding for the operation provided by the Department of Defense.

FAIR estimates the cost of these deployments based on publicly available figures relating to the pay of state National Guard units deployed at the border. At the prevailing rate for actively deployed National Guard, this operation (which has been ongoing for multiple years) is estimated to currently cost just over \$190 million annually.

Criminal Gangs

In its 2009 National Gang Threat Assessment, the FBI concluded that criminal street gangs, whose members are often illegal aliens, are responsible for the vast majority of violent crimes in the United States, as well as the distribution and trafficking of most illegal drugs.⁶¹ In the intervening years, the presence of illegal alien gangs, especially from Central America, has only increased. Established gangs like MS-13, its rival the 18th Street Gang, the Latin Kings, and growing numbers of new Dominican, Middle Eastern, and Somali gangs are responsible for a broad range of both local and transnational crimes, including: theft, extortion, murder, drug trafficking, human/sex trafficking and gun running.

Because it is impossible to truly quantify the comprehensive cost of gangs to American taxpayers, FAIR does not included an estimate of those expenditures. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that crimes committed by transnational gangs represent a significant portion of the costs imposed on U.S. taxpayers by lax immigration enforcement and irresponsible immigration policies.

Total Federal Justice Enforcement Expenditures

Federal Incarceration	\$1,670,374,000
Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO)	\$4,118,902,000
Customs and Border Protection (CBP)	\$8,565,574,000
Other ICE Operations	\$1,715,897,000
State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP)	\$234,000,000
Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR)	\$622,809,000
Alien Minors	\$8,006,000,000
Byrne Grants	\$4,180,000
DOD National Guard Deployment	\$191,625,000
Total	\$25,129,361,000



Federal Welfare Costs

Welfare Costs

This section details the profound impact that illegal immigration exerts on programs intended to provide financial aid or services exclusively for low-income Americans. Most, but not all, illegal aliens are theoretically ineligible for the welfare programs covered in this section. However, virtually all federal welfare programs available to the children of U.S. citizens are also available to U.S.-born children of illegal aliens because those children are, under the current constitutional interpretation, U.S. citizens. We include this information because the costs of providing benefits to this cohort are directly attributable to their parents' illegal presence in the United States.

USDA Food and Nutrition Service

\$1,550,108,000

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) operates the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), Special Milk Program (SMP), and other food programs that provide subsidized meals to school children. These programs operate in approximately 100,000 public and non-profit private schools and residential child care institutions. They furnish low-cost or free breakfast, lunch, and snacks to millions of children each school day. However, these schools make no effort to identify whether the students using these programs are legally in the United States.

There are approximately 30 million children receiving meals from these programs.⁶² According to research conducted by CIS, approximately 48 percent of illegal alien households received some form of benefit under the school lunch program.⁶³ FAIR estimates that there are roughly 5.1 million students who are the children of illegal aliens.⁶⁴

Based on these totals, approximately 2.45 million children of illegal aliens are receiving this benefit, which is a conservative figure given the typically low incomes of illegal alien households. The funding for school meal programs, including breakfasts, lunch, snacks and milk, cost nearly \$18.8 billion in FY 2019, the last year before the pandemic and the subsequent two-year period (2020-2022) of free school lunches for all students (which was rolled back with the 2022-2023 school year).⁶⁵ To estimate the impact of illegal immigration on school nutrition programs, we take our estimate of the number of illegal alien children and compare it to the total number of participants in school nutrition programs. This comparison indicates that almost 8.3 percent of children receiving meals are part of an illegal alien household. Therefore, we conclude that \$1.55 billion of the federal funds expended annually on the above USDA FNS programs goes to the children of illegal aliens.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) \$5,757,872,000

Colloquially referred to as “Food Stamps,” the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is also administered by USDA-FNS. Most illegal aliens are ineligible for SNAP, but their U.S.-born children are eligible. In certain limited circumstances, elderly and disabled citizens residing with illegal alien relatives may also qualify for SNAP benefits, but they account for only a very small percentage of use by illegal alien households.

Research conducted by CIS found that approximately 31 percent of illegal alien households with children benefit from SNAP.⁶⁶ The estimated total number of American households headed by an illegal alien is approximately 6.7 million, of which 2.7 million contain at least one child.⁶⁷ This would indicate that around 825,000 illegal alien households draw benefits from SNAP.

Given that the average illegal alien household with children has 2.5 children, almost 2.1 million children of illegal aliens are likely to draw SNAP benefits. Data from the USDA indicates that the average monthly benefit per participant in FY 2022 was \$232.72, or \$2,793 per year.⁶⁸ Accordingly, the total estimated cost to the American taxpayer of providing SNAP to the children of illegal aliens is almost \$5.8 billion.

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) \$999,961,000

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, commonly known as “WIC”, provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, healthcare referrals, and nutrition education for low-income, pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.

The WIC program is primarily funded through two separate federal grants: a food grant, and the Nutrition Services and Administration grant. In FY 2022, the food grant was approximately \$4.7 billion and the Nutrition Services grant approximately \$2.2 billion. The total grant allocation was \$6,855,458,974.⁶⁹

Eligibility for WIC is based on income. Currently, those earning between 100 percent and 185 percent of the FPL inclusive qualify. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in FY 2021 WIC served an estimated 43 percent of all infants in the United States.⁷⁰ WIC is available to anyone in the United States who falls within a WIC eligible category, is a full-time resident of the state where he/she is applying, meets the income requirements, and is at risk for malnutrition. As a federally funded but state-administered program, each state is entitled to determine whether it will allow illegal aliens to draw WIC benefits. All fifty states have extended eligibility to illegal aliens.

A study by CIS found that approximately 35.1 percent of illegal alien households with children use the WIC program.⁷¹ Using FAIR's baseline of 6.7 million illegal alien households, this would indicate that approximately 937,000 illegal alien households draw benefits under the WIC program, equating to roughly 2.3 million individuals. In February 2022 (the most recent month of available statistics), WIC served approximately 6.2 million participants.⁷²

Based on FY 2021 data, the average annual benefit per participant is approximately \$426.96.⁷³ This means that the cost to taxpayers for providing WIC to illegal aliens is approximately \$1 billion.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) \$1,430,527,000

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program is the current successor to the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children program. TANF was created to help needy families achieve self-sufficiency by providing temporary cash assistance to supplement their earned income. In order to qualify, applicants must be either pregnant or responsible for a child under 19 years of age, meet income requirements, and be unemployed or underemployed.⁷⁴

As with SNAP, most illegal aliens are theoretically barred from using TANF. However, illegal alien families that have U.S.-born children may still obtain significant financial assistance via this program. Certain TANF benefits are also available to the U.S. citizen children of illegal aliens who are being cared for by grandparents, foster parents, aunts, and uncles. These are referred to as "child-only" applications.

Despite TANF eligibility provisions requiring that applicants be working, seeking work, or training for employment, neither income earned by parents nor caregiver resources are considered when a child-only TANF case is processed.⁷⁵ Therefore, virtually all U.S. citizen children of illegal aliens may be eligible for TANF, under the right circumstances, and the costs for providing TANF to the U.S. citizen children of illegal aliens are borne entirely by the U.S. taxpayer.

There were 1,479,103 child recipients of TANF benefits as of June 2022, according to the DHHS's Office of Family Assistance (OFA).⁷⁶

In FY 2021, according to DHHS OFA, federal spending on TANF amounted to about \$15.1 billion (TANF funding is not adjusted for inflation or other circumstances, so funding levels have not changed significantly since the program's creation by the PRWORA of 1996).⁷⁷ Based on CIS data, FAIR estimates that U.S. citizen children of illegal aliens accounted for almost 9.4 percent of the TANF caseload in FY 2022.⁷⁸ Using this percentage, the total cost for providing TANF benefits to the U.S.-born children of illegal aliens comes out to approximately \$1.43 billion.

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)

\$911,307,000

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) programs are an additional source of welfare benefits that are available to U.S.-born children of illegal aliens, and some illegal alien children through the Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The CCDF program is overwhelmingly federally funded, but is matched in part by state funding.

Pursuant to the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014, the program matches and expands upon state funds spent on programs providing affordable child-care services to low-income families who work, are training for work, attending school, or whose children receive government protective services.⁷⁹

Assistance is provided in the form of either a contracted childcare program or a voucher that may be used to access care from any provider that meets state requirements. Eligibility requirements for these programs vary widely among states

Most illegal aliens are not eligible for regulations, the recipient child is co beneficiary of CCDF childcare programs are awarded based on the immigrant status of the parents. As a result, many illegal aliens receive subsidized childcare

In FY 2022, \$9.65 billion federal funds were allocated to the program. While COVID-19 served as a justification to spend almost \$50 billion in additional CCDF funding (a part of which was spent on the children of illegal aliens), the program does not include this spending spree in our



reason is because there is no clear indication at this moment that this spending will be permanent (in the case of these funding streams, the deadlines for obligating the money have either expired, or will expire in 2023).⁸¹

Since the child is considered the primary beneficiary of CCDF programs, HHS appears to collect little information on the immigration status of the parents of the recipient children. Therefore, we must estimate the childcare expenses for illegal aliens paid out under CCDF programs using the TANF data, for which we estimated that 9.4 percent of the caseload consists of the children of illegal aliens. We do this because the demographics of children from illegal alien households who are eligible for CCDF are very similar to the population that will typically seek child-only TANF benefits and the qualifications for each program set by law cover very similar income groups. While TANF income thresholds are set at the state level, CCDF income eligibility is based on the FPL and state median incomes and tends to have higher thresholds in general; hence, our method of using TANF thresholds may result in a slight underestimation of illegal alien families collecting CCDF benefits. However, it provides the most accurate approximation possible with limited data available.

Applying this proportion to federal CCDF expenditures (the state share is discussed in the state welfare programs section), this works out to about \$911 million spent on children with at least one illegal alien parent.⁸²

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) \$600,350,000

The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program applies to some U.S.-born children of illegal aliens if they have a “medically determinable physical or mental impairment which can be expected to result in death, or which has lasted or can be expected to last for at least 12 months in a row ... provided your impairment keeps you from engaging in substantial gainful activity for at least 12 months in a row.”⁸³

According to the existing research, it appears that only around 1.1 percent of illegal alien households participate in this program.⁸⁴ That would correspond to 73,400 households. If we err on the side of caution and assume that only one person in each of these households is an SSI recipient, and multiplying them by an inflation-adjusted average yearly benefit of \$7,363, federal SSI payments attributable to illegal immigration would amount to a minimum of \$541 million annually. Federally-administered state supplements add an additional \$60 million to this amount.⁸⁵

Public Housing \$334,442,000

When a household is eligible for public housing benefits but one or more members are illegal aliens,

they are eligible for prorated or reduced federal housing benefits, depending on the specific program.⁸⁶ However, housing benefit fraud is common and illegal aliens often live covertly with citizen and lawfully present relatives who are receiving housing benefits.

Currently there is only fragmented data on the use of housing benefits by families with illegal alien members. According to a Congressional Research Service (CRS) report, mixed-status families make up approximately 0.5% of all assisted households.⁸⁷ In addition, the report reveals that this percentage totals more than 25,000 mixed status families consisting of more than 108,000 people, including roughly 55,000 children who were the U.S.-born children of illegal aliens.⁸⁸ At a minimum, therefore, the eligible children of illegal aliens cost taxpayers approximately \$334 million annually, based on the average benefit received per year.⁸⁹ Barring additional information regarding the immigration status of the other households covered by this program, it's impossible to reliably estimate the entire cost of this program.

Total Federal Welfare Programs

Meals in Schools	\$1,550,108,000
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	\$5,757,872,000
Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	\$999,961,000
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	\$1,430,527,000
Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)	\$911,307,000
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	\$600,350,000
Public Housing	\$334,442,000
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Total	\$11,584,567,000